

New Hampshire Special Education Program Approval Report

SAU 76, Lyme School District

**Gordon Shnare, Superintendent
Liz Mayfield , Special Education Director**

Final Report

January 25, 2001

**Visit Conducted on:
November 13 and 14, 2000**

Team Members:

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(Commendations, Citations, and Suggestions for each school)

Note: *It should be noted that suggestions are not considered corrective actions and therefore are given as technical assistance. The district is not mandated to implement them.*

New Hampshire Special Education Program Approval Report

SAU 76

I. INTRODUCTION:

A New Hampshire Department of Education Special Education Program Approval visit was conducted at SAU 76 comprised of the following schools: Lyme School, Thetford Academy and Hanover High School. The visiting team met on November 13 and 14, 2000 in order to review the status of special education services being provided to eligible students.

Activities related to this evaluation included the close review of all the teaching certifications of special education staff, analysis of SPEDIS data and random inspection of student records. Interviews were conducted with the special education director, building principal, regular and special education teachers, related service personnel and administrators as time and availability permitted. Throughout the visit the team had full cooperation from the school personnel and this helpfulness was greatly appreciated.

The report which you are about to read represents the consensus of all the members of the visiting team. Please keep in mind that this is a "report for exception", meaning that only exceptions to the NH State Standards have been addressed. If a component is not mentioned, that does not mean that the team did not review it; it just means that there were no citations of noncompliance to the Standards found in that particular area.

II. STATUS OF PREVIOUS ON-SITE: *Conducted on October 18 and 19, 1993*

The previous program approval visit conducted in October, 1993 when the Lyme School was part of SAU 22, indicates that in general terms, procedures and programming related to the provision of services for students identified with educational disabilities were in order. However, several areas of noncompliance were noted and included: student evaluations not completed within 45 days, qualified examiner not at evaluation summary meeting, no statement of financial responsibility on IEP, LEA representative not at IEP meetings, extended school year not documented, and documentation the Least Restrictive Environment was considered annually was inconsistent. A further issue related to lack of sufficient instructional space for students attending the Resource Room program.

Since that visit in 1993, renovations and an addition have been made to the Lyme School. Present programming is well provided within adequate space. Students attend a resource center for tutorial support and related services, but spend most of their instructional time in the regular classroom.

As to issues related to the special education process and procedures, the district was found to have a continued need to correct numerous issues of noncompliance. A listing of the specific issues of noncompliance follows. In general terms, however, the visiting team found that SAU 76 staff provide well developed instruction and related supports to all of the students within the school district.

III. ISSUES OF SIGNIFICANCE:

SAU 76 staff and administration work hard to provide quality educational programming to all of the district's students. It is the consensus of the visiting team that students identified with educational disabilities are provided with access to the general curriculum and further supported with small group tutorial and related services. The regular and special education staff are working together to ensure that all students receive the necessary services.

The team did identify numerous issues of noncompliance related to procedural requirements necessitated by NH State Standards and Federal Regulations for the provision of services to students with educational disabilities. This appears to be a result of the lack of special education administration and the need for ongoing professional development in areas related to the changing regulations and best practices. The potential for this community school to provide high quality collaborative instruction is excellent. The team recommends that the work already begun on increased communication and the development of a long-range master plan for the district be continued, and that all constituent groups are represented. The connection of general and special education through curriculum development, transition planning, professional development planning and long range district planning will provide a comprehensive systemic approach to successful educational programming for all of the district's students.

An area of necessary attention is seen at the transition points where differences in educational models and programming may be found (i.e. preschool to kindergarten; elementary to middle and middle to high school programming). The visiting team indicated that increased planning and communications at these critical points would assist in the smooth transition and awareness for students and parents.

The visiting team was impressed with the sense of community and spirit that the school district administration and staff displayed during the visit. The parents are welcomed into the school and students appear to be happy and thriving in this educational environment.

PRESCHOOL PROGRAM

COMMENDATIONS:

- There is a good student to teacher ratio.
- Staff expends effort in meeting procedural timelines.

CITATIONS: (in numerical order)

CFR300.125 Child Find
Clarify and fully implement Child Find procedures.

CFR300.320 Transition
Clarify transition planning, communication and collaboration from Part C to Part B.

SUGGESTIONS:

- Establish strong collaboration between preschool teacher with related service and other school personnel.
- Create clear transition planning between Family Centered Supports and Services (FCSS) and preschool programming.
- Utilize PTAN (Preschool Technical Assistance Network) and other such resources for information related to preschool programming.

LYME SCHOOL

PROGRAM(S) VISITED: Elementary School and Middle School programs

COMMENDATIONS:

- Special education and regular education staff at the elementary level work well together.
- The Lyme School has a child-centered staff who utilizes effective teaching strategies.
- The staff to student ratios are very good.
- The school is filled with student art work and has a welcoming atmosphere.
- The teaming approach used by the guidance counselor, nurse and physical education teacher to provide a comprehensive health awareness curriculum to all students is commended.
- The school principal supports staff and is working toward school and community goals of improved communication.
- The school district's commitment to providing special education administration is commended.
- The superintendent and principal are working with stakeholders to create a five year master plan for the district.
- The knowledge and strategies utilized by the speech and language pathologist are commended.
- The Lyme School special education records are well organized.
- Timelines relative to special education evaluations, development of IEP's and placement are procedurally correct.
- Lyme School staff indicates the school-wide training in the area of "Thinking Maps" has been very helpful in providing consistency throughout the school. They also express interest in receiving professional development offerings related to effective inclusionary practices.

CITATIONS:

Ed#1107.02(d)

Referrals

There is no evidence that parents are provided written notice of dispositions within 15 days of the referral.

Ed#1107.03

Evaluations

It is not clear if evaluation team meets multidisciplinary criteria.

Ed#1107.08(c,d,e)

LD evaluation did not include observation. Written report is not signed by all members.

Ed#1107.07(c)

LEA Representative not present at evaluation team meeting.

Ed#1109.04

Notice of Meeting

No evidence of 10 day notice of IEP meeting.

CFR300.504

Procedural Safeguards

Ed #1123.05

Procedural safeguards not given to parents at initial referral, each notification of IEP meeting and reevaluation of child.

LYME SCHOOL, Continued

CFR300.503
Ed#1125.03

Written Prior Notice

There is no evidence of written prior notice, containing all necessary components, in student records.

CFR300.346
Ed#1109.01

IEP Components

IEP's do not include well developed components. Specifically, present levels of performance not based on objective data; no statement of how disability affects involvement and progress in the general curriculum; annual goals are not written in measurable language with objectives benchmarked; no degree of participation in regular class described; no expectation for participation in regular class; no program modifications included; individuals or providers not specified; no clear documentation of parental input; no Transition statement that includes all necessary components; no statement of party assuming financial responsibility.

Ed#1111.01

Extended School Year

No clear documentation on IEP of Extended School Year program.

CFR300.347

Explanation of the extent of participation

No explanation of the extent to which child will not participate in regular classes included in IEP.

CFR300.347

Progress

No clear statement of how progress will be measured and how parents will be informed of their child's progress toward annual goals.

Ed#1109.11

Team Composition

Clear team compositions not clearly documented in each aspect of process.

SUGGESTIONS:

- Provide all staff (special and regular education) with updated training on the NH State Standards and Federal Regulations (IDEA '97) relative to all aspects of the provision of services to students with disabilities.
- Clarify the difference between special education services and 504 accommodations and create a plan for the administration of 504 plans.
- Review the continuum of educational services available within the Lyme School to determine if a full range of services are provided to meet the needs of all students.

HANOVER HIGH SCHOOL

COMMENDATIONS:

- Parents are well involved in team decisions related to student programming.
- Students are included in the general curriculum.
- Staff include Lyme students in all aspects of the high school and are committed to their successful programming.
- Available resources are well utilized by students with educational disabilities.
- Students participate in extra curricular activities.

CITATIONS:

<u>Ed#1113.01</u>	<u>Vocational Assessments</u> There are no vocational assessments evident in student records reviewed.
<u>Ed#1109.04</u> <u>CFR300.354</u>	<u>Notice of Meeting</u> Parents are not given 10-day notice of meeting that includes required components.
<u>Ed#1109.04</u> <u>CFR300.504</u>	<u>Procedural Safeguards</u> Parents not provided procedural safeguards at notice of each IEP meeting.
<u>Ed#1109.01</u> <u>CFR300347</u>	<u>IEP's</u> IEP's do not include measurable goals, specific statement of services; length of school day and well defined transition objectives.

SUGGESTIONS:

- Continue to work collaboratively with Hanover High School staff to develop clear lines of communication regarding all aspects of programming and progress.
- Create clear set of criteria regarding placement of students with disabilities at receiving high schools.

COMMENDATIONS:

- Students are included in general curriculum, in conjunction with the school philosophy the every student gets what he/she needs.
- All staff displays a sense of commitment to and concern for the Lyme students and provide all educational supports to all students.
- The results of staff training related to the accommodation of students with educational disabilities are evident.
- The IEP's written for high school students attending Thetford Academy are well written.

CITATIONS:Ed#1107.03(a)Evaluations

There is no documentation showing team members present at evaluation meeting.
Evaluation team does not meet multidisciplinary criteria. Parent participation not clearly documented.

Ed#1109.01
CFR300347IEP's

IEP's do not include measurable goals, specific statement of services; length of school day and well defined transition objectives.

Ed#1125.03Written Prior Notice

There is no evidence of Written prior notice provided to parents.

Ed#1125.04Written Consent

There is no evidence of written consent for placement in student file.

Ed#1123.04Confidentiality

There is no public listing of names and positions of those employees who have access to personally identifiable information.

SUGGESTIONS:

- Continue to work collaboratively with Thetford Academy staff to develop clear lines of communication regarding all aspects of programming and progress.
- Create clear set of criteria regarding placement of students with disabilities at receiving high schools.

ADDENDUM

JAMES O. MONITORING PROGRAM

SAU 76

Student File Review

Case Study Document

Reimbursement Claim Form

Case Study Addendum Form

<p style="text-align: center;">ADDENDUM JAMES O. MONITORING PROGRAM</p>

SAU 76

There are presently no students in SAU 76 who fall under the James O. Consent Decree.